

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 11-68—SB 371

Select Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Transportation Committee

Appropriations Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING THE INDICATION OF A PERSON'S STATUS AS A VETERAN ON A MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENSE AND IDENTITY CARD AND THE ISSUANCE OF FREE PASSES FOR ANY STATE PARK, FOREST OR STATE RECREATIONAL FACILITY TO CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS

SUMMARY: This act requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner to include a person's status as a veteran, if applicable, on his or her state driver's license or identity card. The person must submit a request to have this status included to the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA), which must verify the status to the DMV commissioner.

The act also extends a free lifetime pass for state parks, forests, and recreational facilities to any resident who is a disabled wartime veteran, as defined under state or federal law. The law already allows a resident age 65 or older to apply for such a pass, which allows free parking, admission, and boat access parking. The pass (1) does not apply to any park, forest, or facility that a private concessionaire wholly manages and (2) may not apply to payments required for special events.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2013; except for the free state park, forest, and recreation pass provision, which is effective upon passage.

VETERAN INDICATION ON LICENSE OR IDENTIFICATION CARD

Under the act, a veteran may submit a request to DVA to have this status included on his or her license or identity card. The DVA must, no later than 30 days after receiving the request, verify that the requestor is a veteran.

If DVA verifies that the requestor is a veteran (e.g., through DD Form 214 or similar forms), DVA must inform the DMV commissioner of the person's request and its verification. DMV must then indicate the person's veteran status on any license or identification card when originally issued, renewed, or issued as a duplicate.

The act specifies that "veteran" means an individual honorably discharged or released under honorable conditions from active service in the U.S. armed forces.

DISABLED VETERAN

Under the act, to receive a free state park, forest, or recreational facility pass a disabled veteran must meet the criteria set in state or federal law. Under state law, a "disabled veteran" is any wartime veteran with any of the following U.S.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

Department of Veterans Affairs service-connected disabilities: blindness, traumatic brain injury, paraplegia or hemiplegia, or loss of the use of both arms or legs or these body parts through amputation (CGS § 14-254).

Under federal law, “disabled veteran” generally means an individual who has (1) served on active duty in the armed forces, (2) been separated under honorable conditions, and (3) a service-connected disability or is receiving certain Veterans’ Affairs or military department administered benefits (5 USC § 2108).

BACKGROUND

Service In Time of War

Under state law, “service in time of war” means at least 90 days active service in the U.S. armed forces during a statutorily defined period of war, unless the veteran was separated earlier because of a U.S. Veterans’ Administration-rated service-connected disability or because the war lasted less than 90 days.

OLR Tracking: JRH:JKL:PF:ts